

It is distressing that something as important as “Vegetation Management” and the **stewards** of the land should be treated with such contempt as is happening during this debate.

[REDACTED]

I submit for your consideration some history dating back to 1960 with regard to the same issues we are confronted with 56 years later. In a submission by a previous owner of [REDACTED] to the Queensland Government, [REDACTED] points out the problems associated with uncertainty of tenure restricting development of country. Please see 1. Attachment which is the cover of his submission; happy to loan the entire document to your committee to illustrate that there is no need to keep recreating the wheel.

Eventually [REDACTED] and others won the argument of the day, and we saw large scale development of the land. [REDACTED] particular land which comprised about 460,000 acres between Clermont & Moranbah in Central Queensland, changed from being marginal pre- development, to change of ownership and use. It went from scant wool & sheep production, to cattle, to the first class cattle and grain farming country it is today. Some country was resumed, other country was sub- divided and sold. With changes of ownership came many more families – new owners, and as they became viable many more people were employed. This was community building, indeed nation building!

82,000 acres was split into some **twelve** blocks: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to name a few.

Twelve other properties that emanated out of the [REDACTED] are:

[REDACTED]

This equates to an additional 23 families and their employees all contributing to the local economy and more importantly to taxes and revenue for the government. These enterprises have a very large flow on effect due to the extensive goods & services they utilize, and the resulting produce that keeps groceries on the shelf, beef on the table, meatworkers in work and so many others employed, rail services and trucking companies busy, shipping containers full, and the balance of trade balanced.

This is not achieved through ‘slashing & burning; trashing” or any of the other uncomplimentary practises landholders are accused of. It has evolved from careful stewardship of the environment – nurturing of the land, by knowledgeable professionals. University degrees do not qualify one to be an environmentalist; working with nature to earn a living from the land is the best qualification one

can get – learning comes from practical experience, attending courses such as Framing/Grazing for Profit, Holistic Management, Field Days, Beef Expos with world class seminars, membership in formal Land Care Groups, the Queensland Government's own very worthwhile programs such as Grazing BMP & Farming BMP – standards based on industry experience and the best available science, and the many training opportunities presented in our area by North Queensland Dry Tropics and CHRRUP, funded largely by the Queensland Government, and even university degrees.

What is proposed in the Reinstatement of Veg Man is a retrograde step which could see the country returning to marginal production, lack of ground cover due to such a heavy tree canopy that nothing can grow underneath, weed problems, and erosion that will see our topsoil deposited to the reef.

I suspect this is not what government strives toward, but it is the landscape that was, when we first came to [REDACTED] in 1981. For thirty five years we have been privileged to be mindful custodians of the land, nurturing and developing our resource to increase production dramatically, enhanced by increased groundcover and a much improved ecosystem, while maintaining a percentage of trees for shade and windbreaks.

In 1982 the Minister for Land personally inspected our property before we were allowed to implement a carefully planned and financed clearing and seeding of scrubs, with a long term vision. This was in the day when Ministers understood and had a genuine interest in the portfolios they were responsible for. It wasn't about a political career for them, it was carrying out the responsibility they had been charged with through the election process.

From the 1982 inspections there was a progression to include such things in the Terms of Lease illustrated in an 1989 example:

TERM OF LEASE:

Day of beginning of lease

Lease in perpetuity commencing on 01/01/1989

CONDITIONS

M76 The Lessee shall during the whole term of lease maintain the parts of the holding on which trees and scrub were previously destroyed in the improvement of the land, free from all suckers and undergrowth as well as all seedling growth of which a Permit to Destroy is not required.

M76 The Lessee shall during the whole term of the lease maintain all improvements on the holding existing at the commencement thereof, together with the improvements effected in compliance with condition1 hereof, in a good and substantial state of repair.

M76 In all other respects the conditions of the lease, including fencing, agistment and occupation, shall be such as are provided by the Land Act 1962-1988.

We are proud of the job we have done at [REDACTED] home of 8,000 mostly Wagyu cattle and 15,000 acres of cropping. We invite inspection at any time to share with you the trials and tribulations of the past 35 years. We ask that we be allowed to continue progress with this valuable land resource, using the knowledge and skills accumulated in the process. As production methods change and knowledge improves there is so much more to do. It doesn't happen overnight, it happens over years, and the environment and our business should not have to go through unnecessary uncertainty and manmade setbacks, such as proposed in changes to the legislation.

Through development we have been able to withstand some severe droughts, including three successive years most recently. As we keep trees in check and increase ground cover we improve the water cycle, doing more with less rain.

A rash decision by government would set back 35 years of progress here. However the government itself will be adversely affected through creating a wilderness that cannot return money to anyone, and for what? It will not be helpful to the environment and there will be a terrible shortfall in government revenue collected through taxes. What sort of long term thinking would allow this travesty to happen?

We have credentials and runs on the board to manage our land. What credentials do the decision makers have, indeed what credentials are behind the Agriculture and Environment Committee? Who am I to question you? Who are you to question me? We can stand up to scrutiny. Please come.

██████████:

██████████, is a beautiful property with Burdekin River frontage, in our ownership for the past twelve years.

It is in serious need of help, due to a huge weed infestation. We have rubbervine, mainly in the waterways, bellyache bush that keeps encroaching from the river – perpetuated by marsupials and wild pigs. We have parkinsonia, chinee apple, poisonous peach and lantana, as well as encroaching timber in country that is naturally open.

The existing Veg Management requirements make treatment of these problems next to impossible. We did not cause them, we inherited them. We know how to address them, but imposts by government make it financially impractical, and requires a lot of chemical treatments which should be avoided if possible. Some clearing done in a planned and thoughtful way would make control affordable and achievable, while serving to stabilize the fragile soil and preventing erosion and unwanted impacts on the reef.

We are working on it, but will not be able to achieve much in our lifetime under the current regime. We are working with the Whitsunday Council and appreciate that resource, but it is discouraging work. We are going to have to find a better way, before anymore country is rendered useless. That is a lose/lose situation.

While a company that will remain unnamed here is not required to do anything with the Bellyache Bush in the headwaters at the Burdekin Dam, people downstream receive an annual crop of seed for the marsupials to spread.

The Queensland Government needs to give proactive people assistance by allowing them to manage their land in a sustainable way. This should be team work, not a them & us, or we are all losers.

National Parks are 'national disasters'. They are perfect models of what not to do, Mezzepa National Park being a prime example in this area. It harbours vermin and creates dangerous fire hazards to adjoining productive properties.

Before any changes to Veg Management occur, the committee should visit some of these Wilderness areas and also properly managed stations that are evidence that production does best in healthy ecosystems with good biodiversity.

Queensland should be leading the world with our environmentally sound production systems, not allowing a misguided green movement and other countries to dictate our terms. Those entities are not looking at the big picture with a holistic view and an eye to the future of Australia fulfilling food and fibre requirements of the world. They have nothing to lose, but Queenslanders do.

If the government persists with placing producers and consumers in jeopardy, they should first be required to demonstrate how the impacts are an improvement on what exists now, with modelling of both scenarios 50 years into the future.

This decision is going to affect me personally, consumers, Queensland's rural communities & cities, and her economy. No one will be left unscathed! Who wants to step back in time? What do we want? Thriving communities in a pristine environment or abandoned wilderness?